

Chair

URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL,

BARNARD CASTLE.

MEDICAL OFFICER'S ANNUAL REPORT.

1913.

Mr. CHAIRMAN AND GENTLEMEN,—

I beg leave to present my Annual Report for the above year.

1. The Health of the Area was wonderfully good during the whole year, and no trouble of the nature of an epidemic was at all prevalent. I can only attribute this to the mild climatic conditions which existed. There was little Infectious Disease during the year, as only the First Quarter gave trouble in that respect. During that period there happened a few cases of Scarlatina and Measles, and it will be pleasing to you to know that the last three quarters were practically free from all Infectious disorders; only one case occurring, and that of Erysipelas.

The Population of the Area is steadily on the increase. Calculated at the middle of the year the total inhabitants numbered 4,836, as against 4,801 at the corresponding period of the previous year.

2. The Surveyor and myself at various times inspected all Dairies, Cow-houses, Slaughter-houses, Bake-houses, etc. Any defects found were pointed out, and nearly all have been put to rights. There are still some small matters in abeyance, but I have no doubt such will be remedied in due course.

3. INSPECTOR'S REPORT. The following comprise the list of Nuisances, etc., which were brought to my notice:

a.	Dwelling-houses, Structural Defects	15,	No. abated	13
	Do. Overcrowding	1,	do	1
b.	Dairies and Milk Shops	1,	do	1
c.	Cowsheds	2,	do	1
d.	Slaughter-houses	4,	do	3
e.	Ashpits and Privies	9,	do	6
f.	Water-closets	4,	do	4
g.	Defective Yard-paving	10,	do	9
h.	House Drainage, Defective Traps	4,	do	4
	Do Disconnected from Sewer	1,	do	1
	Do Other faults	14,	do	14
i.	Water Supply	54,	do	54
k.	Workshops	1,	do	1

4. MILK SUPPLY. The examination of all Milk supplies within the Area has received frequent attention. Any advice that was given was willingly acted upon. I believe the Milk supply to be above suspicion as to quality.

5. FOOD SUPPLIES. No complaint as to unwholesome food reached me. On various occasions I took the opportunity of examining many carcasses of cattle, sheep and pigs, and did not find any evidence of meat unfit for human consumption.

6. WATER SUPPLY. The Water supply to the Area was abundant and continuous during the year. Even in the comparatively dry year there was no lack of water. New cast-iron piping was laid down for a considerable distance between the place of discontinuance of the previous year and the Bowes-Cotherston road, and this I think has tended to increase the reservoir supply as well as preventing the possibility of pollution. No pollution elsewhere has been pointed out to me as possible.

7. POLLUTION OF RIVERS. I believe that pollution of the river Tees at any point within the Urban Area must, if at all, be small indeed, especially seeing that a new sewer has been constructed along the south side of Bridgegate for nearly its whole length.



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8. SEWERAGE. The Old Bridgegate Sewer was occasionally a source of trouble on several occasions, but now that a new one has been laid, as well as an auxiliary one, no further trouble, I think, need be anticipated. In other parts of the Area the Sewerage seemed to be satisfactory.

9. ASH-PITS, PRIVIES, &c. Considerable improvement was effected regarding these during the year. I find from the Inspector's Report that:

- 2 Ash-pit privies were converted into ash-closets.
- 11 Ash-pit privies were converted into w.c's.
- 3 Ash-closets were converted into w.c's.

The numbers of each at the end of the year were:

Total number of water-closets	795
Do ash-closets	78
Do ash-pit privies	82

Steps have been taken by the Council to adopt certain parts of the Public Health Acts Amendment Act, 1907. This will give the Council very desirable additional powers in dealing with certain matters of sanitation.

10. HOUSE REFUSE. Removal of House Refuse has, as heretofore, been undertaken by the Council's carts, and has been found efficient.

All Ash-middens have also been regularly emptied. Various complaints were received as to certain ash-pits being nuisances. These have been attended to, and some have been done away with altogether.

11. HOUSING AND TOWN PLANNING. During the year various measures were adopted to improve the housing of the working classes. The aim has been to demolish such houses as were really a danger to the occupants as regards health, and, as far as possible, to improve such as were capable of renovation with the same object in view—the housing of the working classes. Much was accomplished in this respect.

Better air space and ventilation have been got as well as better lighting, and, in some cases, room for pantry accommodation.

I believe that there exists a sufficient number of houses for the accommodation of working men's families, at least, where houses have been closed or demolished, I have heard of no difficulty of the people finding other houses. Only one case of overcrowding came to my notice, and this was remedied after formal warning. One new house was erected in the Area and has been occupied. The construction of new buildings has had the supervision of the Surveyor.

I append a tabular statement of what has been done in the Area.

1. No. of Houses inspected under and for the purposes of Sec. 17 of the Act	...	...	...	37
2. No. of Dwelling-houses inspected which were considered to be in a state as to be unhealthy and unfit for habitation	...	...	...	None
3. No. of representations made to the Local Authority with a view to making Closing Orders	...	...	...	9
4. No. of Closing Orders made	...	...	...	9
5. No. of Dwelling-houses, the defects of which were remedied without the making of Closing Orders	...	...	...	None
6. No. of Dwelling-houses which, after the making of Closing Orders, were put into a fit state for human habitation	...	...	...	14

The general character of defects found were damp walls, insufficient ventilation, bad lighting, bulging walls and bad roofing, defective paving and insanitary privies.

12. VITAL STATISTICS. The total number of Deaths registered in the Area was 75. Of that number, however, six were non-resident, and three residents died out of the Area. This, therefore, brings the actual number to 72, giving an annual death-rate per 1000 inhabitants of 14.88. This is a comparatively low death-rate and compares very favourably with recent years.

The highest number of deaths occurred, as might be expected, of persons over 65 years of age, viz.: 28. It is gratifying to know that no death occurred of children over one year of age and under five years.

13. BIRTHS. 95 Children were registered during the year, giving an annual birth-rate per 1000 inhabitants of 19·64. In 1912 the birth-rate was 22·90, when 110 births were registered, and in 1911 the rate was 19·30 when 92 were registered.

14. INFANTILE MORTALITY. I am sorry to have to report a rather high Infantile Mortality. Altogether 14 children died under one year of age. This is the highest rate for some years, viz.: 147·86 per thousand of children born. However, now that lady health visitors are making frequent calls and also that notification of births is in force, I trust a less number is reported another year.

15. ZYMOTIC DISEASE. I am pleased to report that no death occurred from any Infectious Disease during the year.

16. PHTHISIS PULMONALIS (including other Tubercular Diseases). Seven deaths occurred from Tubercle of the Lungs (Phthisis), and two from Tubercle of other parts. This gives a death-rate of 1·08 per 1000 of population. Altogether 13 cases of Tubercle were notified during the year.

There is still no Sanatorium for the receipt of Phthisis patients nearer than Stanhope and Wolsingham, but Dispensaries have been instituted as near as Darlington and Bishop Auckland.

The routine, as far as this Area is concerned, is therefore, that as soon as I receive a notification of a case of Phthisis, I make it a point to visit the house and give the necessary instructions as to sputum bottles, fresh air, etc., and further, notify the case at the end of each week to the Medical Officer for the County, as per order of the Local Government Board. The County Council is always willing to supply shelters, or to admit a patient to a Sanatorium when accommodation can be found.

17. INFECTIOUS DISEASES. There occurred during the year 13 cases of Infectious disease, as under :

Erysipelas	...	...	...	1
Scarlatina	...	...	...	7
Measles	...	...	...	5

With the exception of the one case of Erysipelas the others all occurred during or just shortly over the First Quarter of the year, so that the Area has been very free from such diseases.

18. THE FEVER HOSPITAL was improved further by the addition of another ward. This will be of great benefit, particularly when more than two diseases occur in the Area at the same time. Another great improvement is the new supply of water which was laid on from the Council's own main. On the whole the Hospital is in good condition and meets the needs of the area.

19. SUMMER DIARRHŒA was almost non-existent during the year. The two infantile deaths from Diarrhœa and Enteritis, in my opinion, may not have been true Summer Diarrhœa. Every precaution was, however, taken as to its prevention, particularly as to warnings about cleanliness, exposure of foods, etc.

20. WORKSHOPS AND FACTORIES have had regular inspection and little was found that necessitated complaint. No action was necessitated as regards offensive trades.

21. THE INSPECTOR reports his having disinfected or destroyed six lots of Infectious Bedding. He also disinfected six dwelling-houses.

I am, Gentlemen,

Your Obedient Servant,

H. WEIGHTON,

7th March, 1914.

Medical Officer of Health.

